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ABSTRACT

This report presents six articles related to the general conference theme. The topics studied include: (1) aims and purposes in modern language teaching, (2) examinations and tests as controls in language learning, (3) specifying the linguistic and behavioral content of language skills, (4) the contribution of particular techniques to specific aims, (5) areas of methodology where useful comparisons can be made, and (6) techniques for comparative assessment. The appendixes contain a select bibliography, abstracts of current research, and a list of members of the conference. (RL)

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held at State House, London, W.C.1,
on 20th and 21st March 1969

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September, 1969
Centre for Information on Language Teaching
for
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Introductory note

The conference was convened at the request of the Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages and brought together a number of experts representing wide interests in the subject.

The implications of teaching methodology for modern languages are widely discussed today, not only because of the interest arising from new theoretical approaches, and from the availability of new technical aids, but also because of current re-evaluation of the aims of the curriculum in which languages have their place. Traditional aims of language teaching may themselves be subject to re-interpretation and modification because of the techniques now at the disposal of teachers.

Faced by the claims of various techniques, courses and their associated methodology, teachers reasonably seek guidance about their relative effectiveness. An increasing consciousness of the cost—in terms of teachers' and pupils' time, as well as of technical equipment and of teaching materials—prompts administrators to be no less concerned.

The feasibility of research into the comparative assessment of language teaching methods formed the general theme of this conference, and the following pages represent the views of the speakers who initiated the various sessions. At the end of chapters there are brief notes on relevant points arising from discussion. The final chapter attempts to summarize the whole.

The contents table gives the names of the principal speakers who are reported under each chapter title. Appendix 1, prepared by the Research Information Officer at CILT, summarizes research in this field known to be current in Britain. Appendix 2 provides a select bibliography of relevant publications, and Appendix 3 lists the members of the conference.

G. E. Perren
Director,
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Language Teaching

CHAPTER 1

Aims and purposes in modern language teaching

G. E. PERREN

Before considering possible means to assess the comparative efficiency of methods of teaching languages, it seems appropriate first to look at declared aims. Unless we are clear about what we are trying to do, we cannot judge how successful we are in doing it by any method.

Expressed aims often reflect a generalized attitude towards foreign languages held by the society in which they are to be taught. Nevertheless, since aims are formulated by educationists and language teachers, it is reasonable to assume that they should be capable of translation into terms of practical objectives to be achieved in the classroom. It must also be remembered that published aims cannot always be identified with those of the individual teacher or student, while it is also remarkably difficult to be explicit about an activity so diffuse as linguistic behaviour.

A look at published statements suggests that, in schools at any rate, two quite different aims may need reconciliation and co-ordination. The first, which can be called the *general educational purpose* of foreign languages in the curriculum, is prominent in statements by public bodies made to justify modern languages in the curriculum and is variously presented in the following three examples:

1. There was general agreement that this study [of modern languages] can and should rank with that of the classical languages, whether of East or West, [and is] capable of developing the highest cultural qualities; the mastery of the organs of speech, the intellectual qualities of mental discipline, receptivity and critical appreciation of new ideas, and the power of self-expression; the emotional and spiritual potentialities afforded by access to the finest expressions of human experience and aspirations . . .' *The Teaching of Modern Languages*, Unesco, 1955, p. 19.
2. 'Whatever the claims of modern languages to an important place in the curriculum, it must be said at the outset that they cannot be justified unless the course contains intellectual discipline . . .' *Modern Languages*, Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 29, 1956, p. 1.

3. 'The aims of modern language courses in secondary schools are both general and specific. The general aim, which is shared with other subjects of the curriculum, is to contribute to the development of the pupil's personality . . . The specific aims are practical and cultural and are
(i) to enable pupils to understand speech at normal speed;
(ii) to enable them to speak the language intelligibly;
(iii) to enable them to read with ease and understanding;
(iv) to give them a knowledge of the foreign country and an insight into its civilisation and culture.
The development of these aims should be integrated in the teaching of all levels in terms of the age, ability and interests of the pupils.' *Modern Languages and the World Today*, Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1967, p. 15.

Both examples 1 and 2 insist on the respectability of modern languages in almost the same terms formerly adduced to support Latin. Example 3 is markedly different, insofar that after a modest ecumenical genuflection to tradition ('the general aim'), it concentrates on practical achievements ('the specific aim'). This might be regarded as a big step forward, insofar as it posits, as distinct from a general educational purpose, a second vocational and practical aim. However, in passing, one must note that terms such as *normal speed, intelligibly, ease and understanding, express themselves,* etc., are capable of wide differences of interpretation. Sections (i)-(iv) could perhaps be reduced to : 'to enable pupils to speak, understand, read and write the language' without much loss.

More recently a Schools Council Working Paper[1] has indicated the aims appropriate to schools in this country as *educational, cultural, linguistic* and *vocational.* The first three all come within what has been called above the general educational purpose. Of the vocational aim, the paper, after noting the need of one or more foreign languages for university entry, states 'it would be unrealistic to argue that for most pupils, other than the gifted, the learning of a foreign language has any direct vocational value'.

So much for general or pious statements of intent. But just how can such protestations be translated into action? What happens at the next stage when it becomes necessary to specify not overall aims, but the content of the syllabus? As far as Britain is concerned, the major controls on the content of the secondary curriculum are the requirements of GCE and CSE examining boards. At 'O' level these have provided virtually no indication of what should be taught and merely describe examination procedure. For example :

4. 'The written examination will consist of a 3-hour paper containing :
1. Passages for translation from the language.
2. A passage for translation into the language.
3. Four subjects for free composition of which the candidate is to treat one.
4. A half-hour test in dictation.

[1] *Development of modern language teaching in secondary schools,* Working Paper No. 19, HMSO, 1969, p. 3-5

There will also be an oral examination, consisting of:

(a) Reading a passage of some ten lines supplied by the examiner. The candidate will be allowed to study for two or three minutes the passage to be read.

(b) Conversation on simple topics which will include questions on the passage read.'

University of London: *Regulations and Syllabuses for GCE* 1967 and 1968. (Syllabus for French, Italian, German, Russian and Spanish.)

Occasionally boards provide a little more information. For example, the Joint Matriculation Board syllabus for Russian lists eighteen topics from which a choice may be made for the oral test; (interestingly, the Latin syllabus of the same board lists fifteen grammatical constructions expected to be known by candidates). But on the whole, GCE modern language syllabuses avoid even the most cautious statements about the level of skills required, and never attempt the admittedly difficult task of providing any inventory of linguistic items. One cannot help contrasting such statements with the pages of careful detail provided under mathematics or science. Most modern language examination syllabuses provide neither the pupil nor the teacher with any help about what he should learn or teach; only the previous papers and the well-worn textbooks can provide such guidance. Examining boards, of course, have panels of teachers to advise them and often claim that their syllabuses represent teachers' wishes. Can it be that teachers are unwilling or unable to specify what they teach? Such reticence suggests a medieval guild, keeping its craft secure from public knowledge.

If we turn to CSE regulations we find more variation: some examples of French syllabuses are given below:

5. '1. To enable a pupil who has followed a normal secondary school course to understand simple spoken French and write it from dictation.
   2. To enable such a pupil to communicate orally and in writing with reasonable accuracy and fluency on subjects within his or her experience.
   3. To enable a pupil to read straightforward French prose of a suitable standard.
   4. To enable a pupil to acquire some knowledge of France and the French . . .' (also lists topics, basic grammar and, as an example, provides details of the vocabulary expected in one topic). *East Anglian Board (North).*

6. '1. The examination places great stress on ORAL and AURAL proficiency.
   2. A knowledge of four tenses, the PRESENT, PERFECT, IMPERFECT and FUTURE of the INDICATIVE MOOD, will be required.' *Yorkshire Board.*

7. '[The board] bases its CSE requirements in Modern Languages on the four basic principles of language:

   SPEAKING
   UNDERSTANDING
   READING
   WRITING

   A candidate who has the ability to prove a basic knowledge of these four aspects of a Modern Language will gain a pass mark in the CSE examination.' *West Yorkshire and Lindsey Board.*

If we search here for a useful description of what candidates should actually learn in class we are only little advanced. Indefinite terms such as *basic knowledge, suitable standard,* recur. Possibly assumptions about the disciplinary value of language learning are expected to compensate for the lack of precision.

However, it is worth looking at a description of purely vocational aims :

8. 'Courses for industry and commerce . . .

Intermediate Grade

Candidates should have a conversational ability to get about in a foreign country without difficulty, and sufficient confidence in the language to take their place socially.

Candidates must be capable of holding a conversation on everyday topics.

They must be able to follow non-specialised conversation between foreign nationals of the country concerned sufficiently well to inject comments and indicate objection, contradiction or approval.

They must be able to read aloud with assurance and in a manner immediately understandable to the examiner.

They must be able to translate orally with reasonable speed and accuracy from written texts of the foreign language into English. This assumes non-specialised material and the use of a dictionary.' *First Report* of the Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages, 1968, Appendix 5.

This description does not concern itself with educational or disciplinary aims but sets out to describe a level of proficiency as clearly as possible. But how much help does it provide to the teacher about what to teach? For example, *everyday topics* and *reasonable speed and accuracy* tell us nothing of much use, while having *sufficient confidence in the language to take their place socially* implies already knowing their place socially and seems impossible to measure accurately in any way.

It seems that there may be good reasons why it is difficult to design or express examination syllabuses since so few attempt to provide linguistic inventories of what should be learned. Language may indeed lack agreed basic units susceptible of such listing. Words have been tried, but who is quite happy about these? Yet despite objections to the theoretical status of the word, both *Le français fondamental* and the *General Service List of English Words* have been found useful. In the present state of linguistic education, lists of structures to be learned in modern languages tend either to look out of date (as in a Latin syllabus when it lists stylistic trickeries such as ablative absolutes) or too modern and too abstract for the ordinary teacher to comprehend. It is sometimes objected that while it is the purpose of the syllabus (examination-based or otherwise) to describe targets in general terms, it is that of a *scheme of work,* prepared by the school or individual teacher, to specify the content of the course. Such a distinction is largely accepted in Britain, but a list of material (without neces-

sarily giving details about how and when it should be taught) is quite practicable.[1]

Rather than trying to specify the required standards in terms of specific noises, lexis and syntax, we often attempt to describe language learning goals in terms of social tasks. Thus the candidate must speak *simple* French about *everyday* topics, or German *adequate* for buying a railway ticket, or understand a native speaker discussing *familiar* subjects. He must speak the language *intelligibly* (to whom, about what?) or read it with *ease* and *understanding*. (It might be objected that we never *read a language :* we read something written in a language—and perhaps understand that.) But when aims are stated in terms of social tasks or activities to be performed, they can only produce non-linguistic definitions of skills, and often very vague ones at that. Something is still missing : the further description of these social tasks in agreed linguistic terms. Certainly without a linguistic definition of objectives, it is very difficult indeed to begin to test or effectively examine achievement or proficiency. And unless we have the ability to measure what has been taught it is difficult to see how we can compare our success in teaching it by different methods. The effective measurement of language proficiency (or of particular skills) seems fundamental to any clarification of the aims of teaching language. So even existing examination syllabuses are important insofar as they indicate the scale of measurement which must at present be used, and its limitations.

There are, of course, considerable problems in defining even the clearest teaching aims in linguistic terms; these problems increase as the student's proficiency increases. While it is easy to make an inventory of items to be learned in the early stages, it is much more difficult to do so at the advanced stage. At advanced level, refuge is sometimes taken in setting up some such criterion as 'native-like proficiency'. So we implicitly try to measure the learner against the native speaker. But what kind of native speaker have we in mind? It is certainly true that teachers often base their descriptions of desirable performance by the learner on an analysis of the language as used by natives, as a mother tongue. But, if we make tests to sample the skills appropriate to a native speaker and then use them on the learner, we may find them very unrealistic for measuring his ability. For at best the student of a foreign language sets out to learn only a segment of the language which is at the disposal of the native speaker. Few of our pupils or students can profitably aim at, let alone achieve, anything near 'native-like' proficiency, that is unless they go and live in the foreign country. It might

[1] For an example see *Programme grammatical pour l'enseignement de l'anglais* (*Lycées, Collèges et Ecoles Normales*), Institut Pédagogique National, Paris, 1965

be very useful if linguists would set about providing us with descriptions of what might be called 'good L_2 versions' of languages rather than L_1 versions. That is, to describe in some detail the segment which could most profitably be taught to foreign students. This might give teachers the comfort of having restricted, defined and attainable aims, and even make the production of more helpful syllabuses possible. In terms of skills we might also do well to drop the assumption that there are a self-defining four (can one separate, even notionally, speaking from hearing, writing from reading as is so often done?), or that the relative importance of certain teachable and isolable skills (such as phonemic discrimination, production of tones, etc.) remains constant at different levels of learning or in different languages.

Perhaps the first step lies in making new and closer definitions of the social tasks to be performed. We could certainly avoid such terms as 'mastery of a language', or 'good French', which are largely meaningless. Ability in language must first, it seems, be described at least in terms of its use in defined situations about limited subjects. Perhaps then the linguist could get to work to describe what this implies in teachable units (from an analysis of observed examples of what actually happens) and the goals of the teacher could be made more explicit in terms of what to teach. This might also provide a useful corrective to notions, widespread among those who are not language teachers, that language learning is really a very simple business if only given enough time and, of course, the 'right' methods.

Discussion

Talks between the Schools Council Foreign Languages Teaching Materials Project and GCE examining boards have shown that there exists some readiness to develop more defined syllabuses. Since the immediate need for such syllabuses arises from the use of particular courses, experiments on these lines might lead to examinations more like those of the CSE, in which various papers to suit different programmes might be set.

It was noted that in English as a foreign language structural syllabuses sometimes exist (e.g. in India), which could act as a guide for textbook writers, and this, in a system where teachers depend heavily on courses, tended to improve textbook writing. However, while the need for specific guidance for teachers was understood, it was observed that overspecification could limit rather than support increasing competence and possibly produced an overloaded syllabus which placed too much emphasis on correctness according to fixed notions.

CHAPTER 2

Examinations and tests as controls in language learning

A. E. G. PILLINER

If examinations or tests are to be used as controls of language learning, they must be extensive in their coverage. Even today, language examinations are to be found representing an old tradition and consisting mainly, if not entirely, of grammar, translation, précis and composition, with the student answering at length each of a relatively small number of questions. The 1940s, however, saw an increase in the number of pencil-and-paper fixed-response tests. Their advantages over earlier examinations were their brevity, economy, efficiency and ease of scoring, this last an especially desirable feature where the number of students to be tested was large.

The traditional examination tests the skills of reading and writing, and the fixed-response tests that of reading alone. Since 1950, the written examinations and pencil-and-paper tests have been supplemented by tests of listening, and, in the last few years, of speaking also.

This is as it should be. We cannot lightly assume that it is enough to rely on what is easiest to test as an index of overall accomplishment. This would be a hazardous assumption even if as a matter of course each of the four skills were to receive appropriate and sustained emphasis in teaching and learning. In practice, it is only too easy to emphasize one or two at the expense of others. The danger exists that the restriction of testing to skills relatively easy to test will expose teachers to the temptation of concentrating on these skills and neglecting others.

This, then, is one determining factor in constructing tests to be used for

control of language learning. The testing programme should be comprehensive. It should embrace all the skills, and all the elements prerequisite to the manifestation of these skills.

A second factor to be taken into account is the *purpose* of the testing procedure. Four distinct though related purposes suggest themselves : testing for *prognosis;* for *progress;* for *attainment;* and for *proficiency.*

The purpose of a *prognostic* test is to predict the success a student is likely to achieve in a language course. The concept of language aptitude presents certain psychological difficulties and the research done on it is scanty as yet. Mackey[1] suggests the learning of an artificial microlanguage containing in miniature the elements involved in language learning—phonetics, grammar, vocabulary and meaning. A test of this sort simulates the conditions of language learning. Mackey is concerned with general prediction rather than prediction of aptitude in one specific target language. Brooks,[2] on the other hand, seems to have a single target language in mind, since he suggests, as a test of awareness of structural changes, the following :

> Wait! I'm waiting. Go! I'm going. Look!
> (I'm looking.)

Or :

> He gave an order. He gave orders. He wrote a letter.
> He wrote letters. He made an error. (He made errors.)

The purpose of the *progress* test is to measure what has been achieved in a particular segment of language learning over a specified (and usually small) interval of time. It is, or should be, a classroom test devised by the teacher who should have in mind, on the one hand, the specific needs of a specific class of children in a specific classroom situation, and, on the other, a limited short-term objective. The content of the test and the technique of testing should derive directly from actual classroom practice. To put the matter differently, the test itself should be seen as the skeleton framework of a good lesson which could be given on some specific aspect of language learning. For instance, it is easy to see how a useful lesson in English as a foreign language might be given on the idiomatic prepositional verbs incorporating the verb 'to come'. A corresponding test might be built of complete sentences providing context for expressions such as 'come to blows', 'come upon', 'come before', 'come round to', 'come about', which the student has to match with single-word equivalents, 'fight', 'find',

[1] W. F. Mackey, *Language teaching analysis, Longmans,* 1965, p. 404
[2] Nelson Brooks, *Language and language learning,* Harcourt Brace, 1960, p. 159

'precede', 'accept', 'happen', presented in random order. The context of the sentences can be arranged to provide as much, or as little, support as is required for the teaching purpose in hand. I can imagine a good teacher giving an excellent lesson on this group of idiomatic expressions for which such an exercise would serve well as a progress test. The point I wish to make is that a progress test should follow naturally from a specific segment of classroom work and should be related as closely as possible to that work. It follows that the most appropriate progress test is that made by the teacher himself and relates directly to a specific though perhaps limited objective that he himself has set. This, it seems to me, is the way to achieve content validity : to specify—to spell out—the objective quite concretely, to gear the test to the specification, and to decide on the most effective method of teaching to achieve the objective. The test then becomes an integral part of the learning process, an indicator of the progress made, and an instrument for diagnosing specific weaknesses in individual pupils.

The purpose of the *attainment* test is not unlike that of the progress test, but it is longer, and more extensive in scope. It is concerned not with one aspect or unit of learning, but with many. It can be regarded as a representative sample from the whole collection of many shorter and more specifically directed progress tests that have been set, or might have been set, or might yet be set. Its function is to provide an overview of general, as distinct from specific, progress, of achievement to date. If the sampling has been properly done in constructing the test, so that all areas are fairly represented, then good performance on the test may be taken to signify satisfactory achievement over the whole range of elements and skills concerned.

A *proficiency* test is used mainly for placement of a student in (for him) a new institution, or to ascertain whether he is capable of undertaking a course of study for which a minimum command of the language concerned is a prerequisite. For this reason, proficiency tests are constructed without regard to specific courses taken previously. Instead, they are geared to the uses the student will be expected to make of the language in the institution he seeks to enter. Unlike progress and attainment tests, the intention of the proficiency test is primarily 'forward-looking' rather than 'backward-looking'.

With these considerations in mind, how can we best set about the construction of language tests? The first point to note is that general statements about the matter to be examined are inadequate and must be supplemented by detailed analysis. Any examination or test worthy of the name must be based on a detailed analysis of the matter to be examined and on a detailed description of it in terms which teachers will understand and agree with. This means drawing on their findings and applying them to the language examination or test just as

an up-to-date examination in physics or history draws on such findings of professional physicists or historians as may be relevant to the purpose.

The *elements* isolated by linguistic analysis may be broadly divided into three categories: (1) *lexical,* having to do with words and arrangements of words; (2) *phonological,* having to do with pronunciation, stress and intonation; and (3) *grammatical,* having to do with syntax and morphology. Each of these elements occurs in each of the four integrated skills: (1) *auding* or, roughly, listening; (2) *speaking;* (3) *reading;* and (4) *writing.* In addition, a distinction must be made between language *recognition* and language *production.* In the first place, it cannot be assumed that a pupil can automatically produce what he can recognise. In the second, the techniques suitable for testing the one are not necessarily appropriate for the other.

These considerations suggest the construction of a double-entry table such as that shown below in Table 1. This serves as a guide and check on the language elements that can and should be tested within the four skill categories. Some of the cells, which refer to impossible-seeming element-skill combinations, have been blanked out. In speaking, for example, only production is possible.

TABLE 1

	LEXIS		PHONOLOGY		GRAMMAR	
	Receptive	Productive	Receptive	Productive	Receptive	Productive
Auding		-----		-----		-----
Speaking	-----		-----		-----	
Reading		-----	-----	-----		-----
Writing	-----		-----	-----	-----	

----- Indicates 'not applicable'.

Table 2 shows a suggested inventory of tests based on the double-entry table. Tests of the elements are listed on the left, and tests of the skills on the right. A variety of tests may be based on this list, but tests to cover all the elements and skills represented in the inventory seem to be a minimum requirement of a testing programme designed to control language learning and to evaluate its outcome.

TABLE 2

Test Inventory

Testing the Elements	Testing the integrated Skills
1. Sound recognition 2. Sound production 3. Stress, rhythm and intonation	
	4. Auditory comprehension 5. Speaking ability
6. Vocabulary sampling 7. Vocabulary recognition and/or choice 8. Vocabulary production 9. Grammar recognition and/or choice 10. Grammar production	
	11. Reading comprehension 12. Writing ability

Discussion

The difficulty of deciding on the relative weight to be given to the various sub-skills in constructing some model of overall proficiency was noted. The construction of the double-entry table of elements made certain assumptions about the nature of language which might be necessary or convenient for testing. But in the belief that one is testing everything important, one might only be testing what could easily be tested. Co-operation between a language expert and a test technician was necessary to design and construct effective tests.

Clearly expressed aims for language courses were a prerequisite for effective tests of achievement. Such aims must specify in detail the behavioural changes expected in pupils as a result of a course. If it could be decided what learning experiences were needed to produce these changes and thus achieve these aims, this would generate the syllabus. The test or examination should follow these aims exactly : both objective and subjective tests might be necessary.

CHAPTER 3

Specifying the linguistic and behavioural content of language skills

J. L. M. TRIM

Conventionally, it is considered that there are four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive processes, extracting meaning from auditory and visual stimuli respectively, whilst speaking and writing are active motor skills leading to the production of meaningful stimuli. Though neat, this classification is not in itself very revealing, providing little more than cover terms (beyond an indication of goal-directed integration) for sequences of skilled actions which need to be further specified. This specification can only result from a detailed consideration of the act of linguistic communication.

In outline, the act of linguistic communication may be said to comprise at least the following stages: first, in the speaker's (or writer's) central nervous system the processes of formulation and organization of the message; next the innovation of the musculature involved, and consequently the movements of the organs of phonation and articulation (or the writing hand, typewriting finger etc.). These movements, as overt behavioural acts, produce a physical effect upon the environment (a sound wave, or a set of marks). Through his sensory apparatus the speaker is informed of his actions and their effect (feed-back mechanisms) and controls his actions accordingly. The sensory apparatus of the listener (or reader) supplies him with partially processed data, on the basis of which his task is to perceive, identify, understand and interpret the message.

Such a summary does little more than provide cover terms for intricate and highly skilled processes at each stage in the process of producing and receiving messages. This is particularly the case with the complex events in the

central nervous system of the speaker (or writer) which concern the formulation (and receptive processing) of a linguistic message. Each message consists of a string of sentences, or approximations to sentences, sequenced into sensible discourse. It is clear that the formulation of sentences and of connected discourse is highly skilled. Our ability to formulate is firstly dependent upon our having internalized a grammar of our language, with the necessary properties that Chomsky has described. However, the resources we call upon are not limited to that grammar, since they also include a good deal of statistical and pragmatic knowledge. Our ability to formulate is not only dependent on our internalized linguistic resources, but upon our ready access to them. Furthermore, the appropriateness of formulated discourse depends on many factors: our ability to abstract, on the basis of the multifarious stimuli which bombard us, the relevant features of our immediate situation; our awareness of the background, characteristics and needs of the audience; our ability to exploit our own previous linguistic and extra-linguistic experience. These, then, are the factors we must bring to bear on the task of formulating sentences. It is clear that formulation is not simply a matter of an appropriate selection from a large, but finite store of ready-made utterances. That is the case with the relating fixed formulae which match the small rituals which fix the framework of everyday life, but certainly not in sustained discourse or free conversation. It is also clear that we do not simply select a given overall sentence structure and then fill certain slots with appropriate words. There seems to be a continuous process of discourse planning at various levels. The high-level decisions governing the strategy of discourse involve the full complexity of context and factors sketched above, and require a skilled integration of mental processes critical to the speech event, but for which linguistics has not yet developed the requisite concepts or any adequate analytic and descriptive apparatus. Tactical planning, governing the formulation of sentences within discourse, involves a series of interacting top-to-bottom and left-to-right decisions governing the creation of a sentence structure, interspersed with lexical choices. The well-known division of aphasias into 'nominal' (or 'lexical') aphasia and agrammatism indicates that grammatical planning and lexical selection are distinct processes requiring skilled integration.

In general, it seems reasonable to suppose that the formulation of free discourse is by far the most skilled performance in human communication—perhaps in human life. The amount of skill required is dependent on :

(a) the complexity of the extra-linguistic factors taken into account in strategic planning;
(b) the remoteness of these factors from the immediate observable situation;

(c) the extent of long-term dependencies in discourse and their integration;

(d) the complexity of sentence structure, in particular embeddings which produce discontinuous constituents and long-term dependencies; the proportion of top-to-bottom to left-to-right decisions;

(e) the number of semantic distinctive features embodied in the lexical items and involved in their selection;

(f) the density of lexical items of high semantic feature content;

(g) in general, the reduction of redundancy by, for instance, avoiding repetitions and fillers and employing embeddings which require the deletion of redundant elements as opposed to sequences of simpler sentences in which they are retained.

The skilled actions involved in linguistic formulation are not directly observable by any foreseeable techniques and have often been overlooked in simplistic theories of language based on 'black box' behaviourist psychology, but records of utterance show evidence enough of the 'intolerable wrestle with words and meanings', as do manuscript notes for books and lectures. There is an important difference between spontaneous speech on the one hand and writing, or rehearsal delivery, on the other, in that in the former case formulation must proceed in real time. Inadequate skill in formulation then shows up in the fragmentary or ill-formed nature of the discourse, or in over-long pauses, over-use of filler phrases and appeals to the listener to know what one is trying to say. For himself, the present writer is only too well aware of making 'a raid on the inarticulate with shabby equipment always deteriorating in the general mess of imprecision of feeling'. In writing, where the time available for formulation and reformulation is relatively free, the evidence of struggle may be largely eliminated, or inhibited from any overt manifestation. The final formulated utterance, which appears (with any luck) to flow so smoothly, is thus a product, shaped by the use of still-born utterances as tools, discarded without trace.

I have spent a good deal of time on these skills of formulation, which precede any overt phonogenic activity, because of their central importance and relative neglect. Neglect, that is, in much linguistic theorising about language use. It is clear that a large part of education is devoted to equipping a child, or young person, with the linguistic and pragmatic resources which he must command when participating in acts of communication and in training him to perform well in these acts.

The creative manipulation of linguistic resources in this way is a highly

conscious affair. Indeed, it is highly appropriate that consciousness should be directed to high-level meaningful decisions. For this to be possible the speaker, or writer, should be freed from having to give conscious attention to the low-level implementation of those decisions. In fact, the control of the speech musculature for phonation and articulation, as well as a good deal of the morphological and low-level syntactic organization of utterances, becomes automatized and unconscious (though often amenable to conscious manipulation) at an early age in the mother tongue.

Similar considerations apply to the reception of speech and written messages. We become sensitized to the distinctive differentia of messages, and relatively insensitive to non-functional differences. We learn to accept a wide variety of inputs and, on a problem-solving basis, to identify the sentence which seems most likely to underlie the data we receive. Having understood the sentence and the discourse in semantic, i.e. linguistic, terms, we have then to interpret it in relation to a constellation of contextual facts. Here again the 'higher' integrative activity rests on a basis of automated procedures of which we are generally, and rightly, unaware.

When it comes to learning a new language, however, the smooth functioning of this integrated system breaks down. What rests on inbuilt universals can presumably be exploited without learning. Unfortunately, we can at present only guess what this may be. The learning of all linguistic elements, categories and features shared between L_1 and L_2 is greatly facilitated, whilst that of those which are divergent is greatly impeded. This is the basis of applied contrastive linguistics, of course. The difficulty is to develop a coherent, organic, autonomous second language system which is not simply attached as a set of late transformational (translative) rules to the grammar of L_1.

It would take too long here to explore the ways in which different types of learner attempt to come to terms with the near-impossibility of replicating in a second language the full range of skills developed for the first, from the direct transfer of all automatized skills, producing fluent, but strongly 'foreign' speech, to the careful observance of phonological, morphological syntactic rules at the expense of almost all fluency and immediacy of discourse—or the strictly problem-solving approach to message reception with no attempt to master formulation skills. These may readily be understood in terms of the skill content of speech, but for the intelligent planning of language learning we must investigate the cost-effectiveness of teaching the various skills in the light of available resources in learner time, teacher time and equipment time and of the special purposes for which languages are being acquired.

This misses the general problem of 'education' and 'training'. Education aims at the communication of generalized internal resources ('competence') upon which the learner may draw in a wide range of largely unpredictable situations, developing 'performance' as his situation dictates. 'Training', with a special end in view, concentrates on producing an efficient performance of a specified type, developing only the minimum competence required for that purpose, as part of a generally cost-conscious approach. The long debate, conducted in highly emotional terms, between the advocates of a humanistic education and a vocational training, is ultimately a pseudo-problem, since the proper analysis of cost-benefit with a proper weighting of all the sociolinguistic factors involved should enable us to reach a rational solution in the particular cases which, taken together, form the full ecology of language use.

CHAPTER 4

The contribution of particular techniques to specific aims

M. A. L. SCULTHORP

The sum of techniques available for teaching languages today is the pooling of all the resources that can be contributed by the educational psychologist, the expert linguistician, the native speaker, the course-producer, the educational technologist, the practising teacher, and the learner himself. In theory, at least, this is true. It is in fact often unfair to expect experts and researchers to provide tidy answers to practical classroom problems, for researchers tend to be concerned with theories, and these cannot necessarily be immediately applied. So the teacher has his own language skill and pedagogic skill, his course and technical aids—and his learners—to rely on.

The teacher teaches in order that *this learner* should learn. Therefore what he teaches and how he teaches it must depend on the particular learner. Skinner's daughter had a long poem to learn one fine summer's evening. Her father sent her out to play, put the poem up on a chalkboard, called her in to read it, then let her return to her play. Subsequently he gradually expunged words and phrases, calling his daughter at calculated intervals to read the poem, supplying the missing parts. By the end of a pleasant day's play, the girl had learnt the poem painlessly and had spent no time on the process. But one cannot help thinking that her father had a busy and rather wasted evening. However, this does illustrate the imbalance of effort that seems to characterize education today.

Our duty is to take the learner as he comes—with his own degree of aptitude, with a certain experience of language that has been converted into his present capacity to perform in the language, with his own motivation. What he

lacks we must provide. The solution for successful teaching might therefore appear to be a 1 to 1 teacher-learner situation, as in private tuition, or a 0 to 1 teacher-learner ratio, as in fully programmed instruction. With present pressures, some would urge the latter situation, with the teacher locked *inside* the machine. But we may be sure that neither individual tuition nor self-tuition is the best way to deal with all language problems with all learners. It might well be asked what can be taught in large groups at one extreme, and what students can do for themselves at the other. As teachers we try to suit the method to the problems and to the learners, and it is our hunches which it is now proposed to put to the tests of comparative assessment and measurability.

Such measurements as we may propose to use can obviously be most easily applied to well-defined and well-contained jobs. Experience in the armed services and in industry seems to have proved the efficacy of teaching-machines for the limited business of training in mechanical procedures; we would hope to prove similarly that the use of language laboratories facilitates the training in mechanical linguistic procedures. A limited enquiry into the use of the language laboratory is being carried out under the guidance of Professor Hawkins, and it will be interesting to know what this reveals. In the meantime, I know, however, that I am grateful to language laboratories for the flexibility they allow to the system we work at Kent. Languages are great big untidy jumbles and most of us muddle our way through words all our lives. The orderly scholars and teachers try to take us through their 2,000 or 3,000 logical drills, and many of us default or rebel. Orderly testers can measure the results of each of these steps. It is theoretically possible to compare the lab drill method with the live-teacher-class method, supposing one can equate teacher with teacher, learner with learner in the compared groups. But do these linguistic contortions, as they ought, gel? The systematic presentation must at some time be 'complete', and the learner must be freed from control, set loose to use, for his own ends or for appreciation and personal pleasure, the totality of language. At what stage does this happen? Almost certainly not before the specific aims have been achieved by whatever particular techniques are best suited for them. The introduction of French in the primary school called for the selection and limitation of language suitable for the young learners, for methods that fitted the primary school approach, and the use of a variety of visuals and realia and recorded sound. This age-group has been well served by the course-producers, some giving very ample support to the teacher, some leaving far more for the teacher to supply. In this sphere the audio-visual presentation and the activity-method follow-up seem techniques well suited to the task. It would be interesting to know, however, what degree of freedom or latitude various teachers wish to have, and for

what reasons, and one would like more evidence, for example, about the way in which the moving film can be handled in the teaching situation in comparison with the film-strip, slides, still visuals or displaceable visuals, and, indeed, about the limitations of visuals when it comes to conveying meaning.

Audio-visual courses in use in 1958 in secondary schools are less useful now that the primary French cohorts are invading the secondary schools, and the vacuum is even now being filled by the efforts of the Schools Council Foreign Languages Teaching Materials Project workers. Here, whether for continuation courses or for FL_1 or FL_2 beginners' courses, the problem poses itself whether similar techniques are suitable for long in the secondary school course. It is at this stage of language learning that techniques will need more variation, to take into account the more marked differences of aptitude. No one wants to keep the bright and gifted marking time. One hopes that extensive, even voracious, reading will at this stage be a means of adding to the language-experience and language-enjoyment. How long will the reading need to be controlled? A sure sign of the success of our language-teaching techniques should be that very soon children having had eight years of French should be making nonsense of the present 'O' level examination, even with the suggested reforms.

If in the regular school courses there is opportunity to develop well-ordered techniques based on long-term investigation and expert advice, for some time there will be areas where a good deal more experimentation will have to continue. Schools broadcasting, extremely good in its long-established supplementary language lessons, has more recently added radio-vision as a technique, and has found a workable formula in its Saturday morning study sessions. Independent television produced some excellent programmes for sixth forms and middle forms, then later for primary school teachers; BBC television has experimented with several formulas for first and second stage language teaching—against formidable odds. The supplementary books and records that accompany these courses are interesting for us as teachers. It would be useful to exchange views on the methods of presentation that have been tried, and interesting too to be able to test the results of these courses into which so much serious effort is put by the linguistic advisers and the producers. Now that tape-recording and video-recording are easy, it is to be encouraged that these transmissions be exploited in evening institutes and elsewhere. A very precise demand for language can come when an urgent need arises in industry, as when a company is about to set up a factory abroad or lands a civil engineering contract overseas. Almost always, the request to produce a course comes at too short notice. Almost always, one will have to haggle to get a sufficient number of hours for the course. Almost certainly there would be no usefulness in existing courses—a one-off job is

needed. Hasty preliminaries may involve gathering evidence on tape by visits to factories, by recourse to house-magazines, technical literature, and to native-speaker opposite numbers. In addition to preparing the professional man, one needs to prepare the social man—and his wife. It is, however, rewarding to work such a course up to pitch, to reach the climax just before the men leave to put the language as well as the factory or project into operation abroad.

This question of climax and timing is a key question when one considers the effectiveness of techniques—and one cannot always control these factors. A brief I had, to ensure that non-linguists at the University of Kent should be able to read with reasonable facility in at least one language for purposes of their specialist studies, has proved far more interesting than it sounds. By reading, we mean thought-getting. Reading has been defined as getting meaning from the printed page and bringing meaning to it. This is not easy, even in French, even if students already have 'A' level. They have been conditioned by their sixth form teaching, which has too often been conditioned by the form of the examination. On entry, humanities students with an 'A' level pass in French were reading at an average speed of 162 w.p.m., and those in social sciences at 154 w.p.m. At the end of an 8-week course at the rate of four hours a week, those speeds were increased to 235 (humanities) and 195 (social sciences), with a slight increase in comprehension. This was achieved by various treatments of texts for self-administration or for use in the seminar group. In week 1 a passage of about 600 words is all they can deal with in an academic hour. In week 7 the passage is 2,300 words or so. However, after these gymnastics, many students are not required by their specialist teachers to read foreign language sources immediately or regularly. The skill that has been built up will consequently deteriorate and will need to be boosted again later. Just as in industry there comes the special job for which special training is necessary, so the university student in his first year will read the general literature of his specialism, and two years later a more deeply specialized literature for which he will probably need more help.

To sum up the techniques I selected : there are the linguistic techniques of selection, organization, ordering, and course-writing, the teaching techniques of audio-visual presentation, practice and exploitation of materials, with impetus and timing as important factors.

Insofar as ability to use foreign languages equips pupils and students with a tool for better study and makes them potentially more useful to the economy at a later stage in life, it can be said that our teaching is a measure of productivity. If language teaching can stand up to the scrutiny of cost-effectiveness in educational terms it may doubly justify its utilitarian function.

Towards these two ends should be directed the efforts of linguists and teachers of languages to discover methods and techniques that produce useful results economically in terms of time and of manpower. In my opinion, these two forms of cost are of more serious importance than the price we pay for the equipment that may be instrumental in the improvement of language teaching. I hope we shall not be more sensitive about the actual cost of our equipment than are the engineers—we are likely to be more overawed by the slide-rule than they are—always provided that we can justify it on grounds of efficiency or of convenience.

Discussion

The use of audio-support, through the use of a language laboratory, to develop reading speed raised problems of encouraging phonation by students. At the University of Kent audio-support was dropped as soon as it appeared to interfere with more efficient reading. Recordings of readings at different speeds were made available.

The following areas for investigation and research were indicated :

1. Evaluation of the use of new media in both primary and secondary schools—with special reference to the use of visuals with young children.
2. The use of tape-recorders in secondary classes.
3. The relative effectiveness of different techniques on children of different abilities.
4. The use of broadcasting in co-ordination with (a) school work and (b) work at home, with minimum guidance from the teacher.
5. The development of reading ability in foreign languages, especially at university level, particularly on the question of how far phonological competence is a necessary prerequisite to good reading habits in various languages.
6. The place of teaching grammar (a) for production and (b) for recognition—particularly in relation to reading.
7. The training of teachers : (a) by using special techniques to improve their ability and (b) so that they themselves can use appropriate techniques for particular groups of learners.

CHAPTER 5

Areas of methodology where useful comparisons can be made

A. SPICER

1. When to embark on comparisons

From selection at 11+ to the awarding of classes at final degree examinations, the learner is constantly subjected to comparison with his fellows. The educational system has always readily included examinations and tests of pupils' performance and competence, presumably because these are thought to be both feasible and useful, and this tendency continues, even though it is now sometimes admitted that these examinations and tests can be inefficient and even unfair. On the other hand, we have been far less ready to compare teachers, materials or methods.

In recent years, as CILT knows only too well, there has been an increased demand for comparative evaluations of courses. What has deterred people from undertaking such evaluations in the past is the relative difficulty of isolating the different factors which may contribute to the apparent success or otherwise of any given course, such as the skill of the teacher or the aptitude of the pupils.

The demand that methods and materials should be more closely scrutinized and compared is a growing one which most of us welcome, but before we can usefully embark on comparisons of courses or methods of teaching we must be in possession of a great deal more information about them than the authors normally provide. In fact, throughout this conference we have been reminded of the need for more detailed statements of the aims of foreign language teaching, specifications of the linguistic and behavioural skills to be developed in the learner, definitions of the linguistic, situational and cultural content of the

teaching syllabus and descriptions of the teaching techniques employed. When, and only when, all this data is available, can we reasonably consider such questions as what methods or courses we can usefully compare and how the comparison can be made.

2. What to compare

Different courses with similar aims and similar target pupils

Since both *En Avant*[1] and *Bonjour Line*[2] claim to be designed for pupils beginning French at about the age of eight and set out to teach them to understand, speak, read and write the language as well as something about the country and its people, since both claim that they can be used by the average primary school non-specialist teacher, teaching all pupils at the rate of four or five 30-minute periods per week, since both are audio-visual courses and both follow the same order of the introduction of the language skills, it would seem that here we have an ideal opportunity to carry out a comparative evaluation. Unfortunately, what has been lacking so far is a large enough sample of pupils following each course to enable matched groups with matched teachers to be tested for their achievement, but no doubt this will come. This kind of comparison is what many teachers ask for and although it is unlikely that any one course is better in every respect than any other, or equally suitable for all kinds of teacher, it might be possible to say in the end, for example, that one course is better for teachers who speak fluent French, while another is better for teachers who are not fluent in French.

Different courses using different methods but having a certain number of aims in common—e.g. *Let's Speak French*[3] and *Voix et Images de France*[4]

In this case the achievement of all pupils would be measured in all the skills covered by the two courses, even though this would mean testing a pupil's ability in some skill he had not been specifically taught. This might be very worthwhile and interesting, particularly if we are concerned in comparing methods and materials and not pupils (i.e. the pupils are only tested as a means of testing the material).

We might in this way discover, for example, that it was not necessary to *teach* spelling for the pupils to be able to spell correctly, or that if you taught

[1] Nuffield Foreign Languages Teaching Materials Project, *Stages 1A* and *1B* 1966, *Stage 2* 1967, *Stage 3* 1968, E. J. Arnold & Son Ltd.
[2] Hélène Gauvenet, May Hassan, P. Guberina and P. Rivenc, Didier, Paris, 1963
[3] Pamela Symonds, Oxford University Press, 1962. Tapes by Tutor-Tape Co. Ltd.
[4] Centre de Recherche et d'Etude pour la Diffusion du Français, Paris, Didier, 1961

pupils to understand and speak a language they could perform as well at translation as pupils who had been specifically taught to do this: or, or course, you might find that they could not.

The same course using different techniques—e.g. *En Avant* with/without tapes/visuals.

The same course using different target pupils or teachers—e.g. *Tavor*[1] with primary and secondary school beginners, *Frère Jacques*[2] with specialist/non-specialist teachers.

Different methods of teaching the same skill to the same target pupils with the same teacher—e.g. phonic method/'look and say' method of introducing reading.

3. How to compare

Detailed description and analysis of the linguistic, situational and cultural content and of the skills developed. It would be particularly useful for teachers, for example, to be able to compare the content of one course with that of another and with an examination or 'ideal' syllabus.

Achievement tests of pupils' performance during and at the end of the course.

Achievements tests of pupils immediately after, for example, learning to read and then again one or two years later.

Comparisons of the cost-effectiveness type, e.g. comparing time spent, cost of apparatus, etc., degree of training of teachers, etc.

4. Examples of useful partial comparisons which might be carried out

Audio visual v. audio-lingual.
Overt grammatical explanation v. no grammatical explanation.
Phonetic training v. imitation only.
Tape as model v. teacher as model.
Group teaching v. class teaching.
Self-instructional mode v. teacher mode.
Use of English for explanations v. no use of English.
Intensive teaching v. extensive teaching.
Purely oral introduction v. oral and reading and writing introduction.
Coloured visual presentation v. black-and-white visual presentation.

[1] Tavor Aids Audio-Visual French Course, V.V. Kamenew, Educational Foundation for Visual Aids, 1960
[2] J. Bertrand, J. L. Ferrot, M. Garnier, Bureau pour l'Enseignement de la Langue et de la Civilisation françaises à l'étranger, Hachette, Paris, 1967

These suggestions are intended only as examples and are not listed in any order of priority. In any comparison of this sort it is, of course, essential that in each case the target pupil, teacher etc., should be clearly specified and that as far as possible all aspects of the teaching and materials should be held constant except the two features compared.

Discussion

It was pointed out that although the idea of comparing the overall merits of different courses for the benefit of the teacher was persuasive, there were—from the research point of view—two disadvantages :

Investigation would need to be wide-ranging, time-consuming and highly expensive because of the large number of teachers and schools which would require study or comparison.

Results are unlikely to be highly significant and would probably not answer fundamental questions.

While tackling smaller aspects of the same problem individually might be more profitable, results of research on teaching methods in all subjects generally showed that method was less important than the teacher's competence—which in turn depended very much on the teacher's belief and confidence in what he was doing. In any comparison there needed to be a sufficient number of teachers involved to neutralize the teacher variable.

Investigation into the general influence of reading habits acquired in the mother tongue on the development of reading skills in a first foreign language and possibly the influence of both on learning to read a second foreign language might be fruitful, and could illuminate the problem already referred to (see p. 26) of how far reading skills required to be based on phonological skills. Interdisciplinary co-operation between psychology and linguistics would be necessary to basic research in such a field.

CHAPTER 6

Techniques for comparative assessment

(The following is based on general discussion throughout the conference and more particularly on that of the final session)

As applied to language teaching, *method* is used with a great variety of meanings. While at one extreme it may refer simply to the techniques used to teach or practise particular items in the classroom, at another it may comprehend the whole complex of materials and aids which make up a complete course, together with the teaching procedures implied or required by using them. This wide range of meaning, as well as some of the resulting confusion, is exemplified by the common use of such expressions as direct method, grammar-translation method, oral-aural method, audio-visual and audio-lingual methods, *la méthode Voix et Images de France,* etc. which in some degree all refer both to the materials used and to teaching procedures. The situation is not made much clearer when a greater degree of imprecision is deliberately sought by using the term *approach* in place of *method,* as is sometimes done.

However, whatever its precise meaning, *method* usually describes an activity which can be regarded as independent of any particular teacher's personality, can be adopted by other teachers, and which notionally can therefore be isolated for description or analysis from the teachers employing it. Regarded thus, it is an aspect of teaching which can be evaluated independently of the teacher. Such a procedure may be more theoretical than real, although obviously it is of considerable importance when considering the use of language laboratories or other technological devices which, partly at any rate, restrict or condition the immediate control by the teacher over his pupils' learning. In any case, the idea of comparing methods seems more feasible and useful than that of comparing teachers (who are all different anyway, cannot be duplicated, and often cannot easily be changed). Language teaching efficiency is a joint product of materials, techniques and the ability and personality of the teacher in unknown

proportions. Whatever *method* is, it is likely that the teacher will be found to be by far the most important factor in most school classrooms.

If only for this reason, any comparison of methods may turn out to be less profitable than may be thought, since 'good' teachers apparently secure excellent results when using 'bad' methods, while 'good' materials will not necessarily compensate for a 'bad' teacher. Inevitably, planned research to compare relative success in language teaching by examining the results of using particular methods, even where it first determines the aims of teaching and carefully measures the extent to which these have been achieved, is likely to produce results which show the great influence of many variables—including not only the teacher, but also the conditions of teaching and learning, the pupils' home and social background, the pupils' motivation, and so on. No course is 100 per cent likely to succeed in all its aims; no method is infallible; no teacher is equally successful with all pupils. So a well-designed research project in this field, as in other areas of educational research, may well, in seeking to answer one question, pose many more which demand further research. Such questions may, however, be valuable, even when they can have no clear answers at present.

Within the wider concept of method, changes in the present organization of language teaching and in the training of teachers could prove to be much more revolutionary than new developments of materials or techniques. Questions affecting the organization of the curriculum in relation to language teaching may need careful study, as, for example, the comparative merits of intensive and extensive language teaching. Concentrated teaching of a language within a period of two or three years, as against more leisurely and more widely dispersed teaching spread over four or five years, might yield higher returns. But at what ages and points in the curriculum would it be profitable to borrow the extra time required for block language teaching from, say, geography and history, which could be paid back later? At a time when the composition and balance of the curriculum are under scrutiny, such questions must arise. The present pattern of the curriculum may be dictated more by immediate administrative considerations than by educational factors which still require research to determine their importance.

Similarly, accepted ideas about the size and organization of classes may require change. The static class of thirty or so pupils might be replaced by larger or smaller groups for particular purposes. The potentiality of group and team teaching, not less than the varied usefulness of language laboratories and tape-recorders requires further investigation. As well as the technologist, the 'organization and methods man' has his place in determining educational developments. The cost-effectiveness of the teacher is admittedly difficult to assess, but if we

consider it at all, we are yet again brought back to the need to clarify our educational aims and teaching objectives. The importance and high cost of the teacher (whatever the method he uses) suggests that studies and experimental work to improve the training of language teachers, both before and during their service, should be undertaken. Technological aids to training have yet to be fully exploited, although there is already much evidence of the value of video-recording. The use of exchange teachers from abroad for language teaching may have new potentialities as the emphasis shifts more and more towards ensuring proficiency in speech or in the use of the contemporary language. Such matters take us beyond the scope of merely finding more efficient classroom techniques for teaching bits of particular languages, or of comparing, by observation, evaluation and measurement, their relative success. They determine, however, the fundamental and changing conditions under which the choice and use of a teaching method, however defined, must be made.

Teaching aims must be defined before success in achieving them can be measured, and almost any work in comparative assessment requires reliable measuring instruments. Thus, specific achievement tests at numerous levels are needed as tools even for minor projects conducted by individuals who wish to make their own enquiries, as well as for major investigations. There are as yet very few standardized tests of achievement in foreign languages, which may have much to do with the lack of confidence with which claims for success in teaching are sometimes accepted. New techniques for measuring proficiency in languages appear to be most urgently needed at the higher levels, corresponding to 'A' level, or indeed for adults whose vocational use for a language can be predicted. Aptitude testing, directed towards clarifying the potentialities of pupils for learning new languages has, when aimed at generalized skills, not yet yielded very useful measures; if directed towards particular skills in specific languages it might more effectively complement achievement tests.

Research into the comparative effectiveness of different language teaching methods and procedures will probably always be inconclusive because of the many factors involved. An 'improved' teacher may be a better bet than an 'improved' course; but an improved language laboratory, an improved classroom and an improved curricular organization may all play a part. Research projects in this field must involve not only the academic investigator, whether linguist, psychologist or psychometrician, but also the teachers, colleges and institutes of education and the administrative authorities. The cost of such research may be low compared with the amounts which are invested in the development of materials. Research may help to provide a valid justification of such investment.

APPENDIX 1

Current research

The following extracts from CILT Research Register describe research in progress in Great Britain

502 D. J. Shirt, Department of French Studies, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne 1. *Associate :* Mrs M. Hilton (University of Birmingham).

French language teaching experiment. An attempt to co-ordinate the teaching of language and literature at university level. The experiment involves three hours' instruction per week (two hours in class, one hour in laboratory) with a group of first-year students. Their performance will be measured by traditional examination methods against that of a control group taught on traditional lines. The object is to find an alternative method for language teaching other than the translation method, as well as to co-ordinate the various aspects of the subject. *Date begun :* October 1967.

607 Professor E. W. Hawkins, Language Teaching Centre, University of York, Heslington, York. (Research at : University of York and Archbishop Holgate's Grammar School, York.) *Associates :* P. Green (University of York); J. Caley, D. Lloyd (Archbishop Holgate's Grammar School); P. Barber (Birkbeck College, University of London), psychometrician. *Sponsor :* Department of Education and Science, through Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages.

Controlled comparison of three matched grammar school classes learning German with and without a language laboratory. 104 boys; age at start, 11+; duration of first phase, three years. *1* is using *German, a structural approach* (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh) with tape-recordings of native voices but *is not* using a language laboratory; *2* is using *German, a structural approach* with tape-recordings of native voices and *is* using a language laboratory; *3* is using the Nuffield German course, *Vorwärts* (Arnold, Leeds) with tape-recordings of native voices and *some* use of the language laboratory. The groups are matched after grading on the Pimsleur aptitude tests and intelligence tests (verbal and non-verbal) plus a language aptitude test based on Swedish, devised by the University of York; teachers rotate every term. Progress is recorded every three months on videotape and in written tests. *Date begun :* August 1967. *See also* no. 608.

608 Professor E. W. Hawkins, Language Teaching Centre, University of York, Heslington, York. (Research at : University of York and Doncaster College of Education.) *Associate :* A. Barley (Doncaster College of Education). *Sponsor :* Department of Education and Science, through Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages.

Comparison of two modes of language laboratory, the audio-active and the audio-active-comparative, with matched groups of college of education students learning French. The groups are matched on MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for teachers and advanced students, the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery and verbal intelligence tests. They will ultimately be retested, using the MLA tests. This work is supplementary to that described above (no. 607). *Date begun :* September 1968.

727 Mrs C. Burstall, National Foundation for Educational Research, 79 Wimpole Street, London W1. *Associates :* 2 research assistants, 2 technical assistants. *Sponsor :* Department of Education and Science.

The French project : an investigation into the teaching of French in primary schools. The project will present an independent evaluation of the pilot scheme for the teaching of French in selected primary schools. A longitudinal study is being carried out of 2 consecutive year-groups of pupils (about 12,000 children). Suitable control groups have been set up. Tests of proficiency in French (listening, speaking, reading and writing) have been constructed by the project staff. The experimental sample will be followed through until the end of their second year in the secondary school. Attitude scales, proficiency tests, questionnaires etc. will be constructed as required. The study is being continued with a third year-group (*see* no. 902). *Date begun :* May 1964. *Progress reported :* in *French from eight : a national experiment* (first report) by Clare Burstall (*see* Appendix 2).

892 B. Gomes da Costa, Department of Modern Languages, City of Portsmouth College of Technology, Hampshire Terrace, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

A cross-sectional survey of the incremental learning patterns over 3-4 years of a representative sample of students reading for an honours degree in German studies, both at universities and in CNAA-approved courses in England and Wales. An attempt will be made to discover those factors which are associated with variations in linguistic performance in order to make inferences about what makes for *high* levels of attainment in reading, writing, speaking and understanding spoken contemporary German. *Date begun :* January 1969.

894 J. Hare, Nuffield Foundation Resources for Learning Project, Tavistock House South, Tavistock Square, London WC1. *Associates :* Mrs P. Pestell; L. C. Taylor (project director). *Sponsor :* Nuffield Foundation.

Use of self-instructional materials in secondary schools. Exploration of how far, in the teaching of French, self-instructional materials, used under the guidance of a teacher, can be effective in secondary schools. Parallel exploration is being made in four other subjects, all (for experimental purposes only) at third-year secondary school level. *Date begun :* September 1969.

898 G. J. Kemelfield, Centre for Television Research, University of Leeds, Leeds 2. *Associate :* D. Duckworth. *Sponsor :* Department of Education and Science.

Schools television research project. The aim is to establish criteria for the making of educational television programmes. Controlled psychological experimentation is combined with physiological measurement (electroencephalograph). Alternative treatments of CCTV programme materials are prepared and videotaped for classroom and laboratory testing, providing for the examination of factors in programme presentation which influence pupils' attention, comprehension and manner of retention of content (with emphasis on the selection and structuring of linguistic and pictorial signs). The materials are tested with 14 to 15-year-old grammar and secondary modern school children. One experiment in language teaching is planned for 1970 : investigating the influence of length and structure of programme sequences on pupils' attention. *Date begun:* October 1965. *Progress reported :* progress report to the DES; articles by Graeme Kemelfield (*see* Appendix 2).

902 Mrs C. Burstall, National Foundation for Educational Research, 79 Wimpole Street, London W1. *Associates :* 1 research assistant, 1 technical assistant. *Sponsor :* Schools Council.

The third cohort study. An extension of the evaluation of the teaching of French in primary schools (*see* no. 727). The main aims are : to carry out a longitudinal study of a third year-group of 8-year-old beginners in French; to investigate further the teaching of French in small rural schools; to study in detail the factors determining less able pupils' success or failure in learning French; to investigate at the primary level promising lines of enquiry developed during the evaluation of the secondary stage of the pilot scheme. *Date begun :* April 1968.

APPENDIX 2

Select bibliography

This short list includes books and articles relevant to the topic of the conference and some more detailed bibliographies.

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Pimsleur, P. : 'Experimental design in the language field'. *Modern Language Forum,* vol. 42, 1957, pp. 157-63. Reprinted in *MST English Quarterly,* vol. 8 nos. 3-4, 1958, pp. 8-13.

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APPENDIX 3

Members of Conference

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